

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 OIC-02 AGR-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 ICA-11 SP-02 SOE-02
OMB-01 DOE-15 HA-05 /134 R

DRAFTED BY EA/TIMBS:HEMEINHEIT:REFRITTS:LGR
APPROVED BY EA - ROBERT B. OAKLEY
EA-AGEBER
EA/TIMBS:REFRITTS

-----030868 101920Z /40

P R 101842Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 202381

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: ASEAN, SREF, PINT, CB, TH, US

SUBJECT: THAI ASEAN DELEGATION REACTIONS

1. ASEAN: DURING BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH EA/TIMBS
OFFICERS AT NATIONAL AIRPORT AUGUST 7 BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE
FOR NEW YORK, FONMIN UPPADIT SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY
PLEASED WITH THE ASEAN MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE. HE NOTED THAT
THE ASEAN NATIONS HAD RECEIVED A FIRM U.S. COMMITMENT TO
THE ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS BEEN ASEAN'S MAJOR OBJECTIVE.
UPPADIT ADDED THAT THE HIGH LEVEL OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN
THE DIALOGUE WAS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR
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ASEAN, AND THE ECONOMIC RESULTS HAD ALSO BEEN POSITIVE.
(COMMENT: UPPADIT EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE CON-
VERSATION THAT HE WAS NOT JUST BEING POLITE BUT WAS
GENUINELY PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE DIALOGUE. HIS
COMMENTS WERE UNSOLICITED AND MADE ON THE HEELS OF A DIS-
CUSSION OF THAI/CAMBODIAN RELATIONS.)

2. DURING A DINNER CONVERSATION AUGUST 3, THAI DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE PROK TOLD DAS OAKLEY THAT HE HAD BEEN AMONG THOSE RELUCTANT TO HAVE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL ASEAN DIALOGUE IN WASHINGTON BUT THAT AS THE RESULT OF FIRST DAY'S WORK HE HAD CHANGED HIS MIND. HE FOUND THE ATTITUDE OF USG OFFICIALS POSITIVE AND THE DEGREE OF PERSONAL CONTACT AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS VERY USEFUL. PROK WAS SEATED NEXT TO UNDER SECY COOPER AT US-ASEAN DINNER AND WAS OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATIVE AND FLATTERED BY OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES.

3. FOLLOW-UP: MAINTAINING A MOMENTUM IN US-ASEAN RELATIONS WILL REQUIRE THE ON-GOING PRIORITY ATTENTION OF THE DEPT AND POSTS (INCLUDING THE AMBASSADOR). OUR INTEREST AND EFFORTS CANNOT SUCCEED, OF COURSE, UNLESS THERE IS COMPARABLE ATTENTION BY RESPONSIBLE LEVELS OF ASEAN. IT WOULD BE A MISFORTUNE, FOR EXAMPLE, TO AGAIN BE FACED WITH THE ASEAN DELAY WHICH PREVENTED THE WORKING GROUP ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FROM MEETING UNTIL TEN MONTHS AFTER THE 1977 MANILA MEETING.

4. IN THE CASE OF THAILAND, OUR INITIAL HOPE IS THAT WHAT WE PERCEIVE AS THE TURN-AROUND BY UPPADIT AND OTHERS CAN BE COMMUNICATED NOT ONLY TO PM KRIANGSAK AND OTHER LEADERS, BUT TO THE BUREAUCRACY AS WELL. IT IS MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY UNHELPFUL, PROCRASTINATING
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AND CRITICAL IN THE PAST. WHILE WE CAN EXPECT NO MILENNIUM, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANTICIPATE BETTER COOPERATION. IN AN EFFORT TO BUTTRESS IMMEDIATELY THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF THE MEETING, THE SECRETARY WILL SHORTLY BE SENDING A WARM LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO FONMIN UPPADIT.

5. OTHER TOPICS

A. CAMBODIA: UPPADIT TOLD EA/TIMBS OFFICERS THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE BORDER PROBLEM WOULD BE RESOLVED. HE ALSO PREDICTED THAT AMBASSADORS WOULD BE EXCHANGED. WITH A SMILE, HE ADDED THAT IENG SARY HAD ASSURED HIM ON BOTH THESE SCORES IN JULY, "JUST AS HE HAD SIX MONTHS BEFORE WHEN I MET HIM IN CAMBODIA". (COMMENT: THE OBVIOUS IMPLICATION WAS THAT HE WAS SKEPTICAL OF IENG SARY'S ABILITY TO CARRY OUT HIS PROMISES.) UPPADIT ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT WITH THE PRESSURE THE CAMBODIANS FACED ON THEIR BORDER WITH VIETNAM, PHNOM PENH WOULD SOONER OR LATER HAVE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH BANGKOK.

B. THAI POLITICS: UPPADIT WAS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF FORMER FONMIN CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON

HIS ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT IENG SARY'S VISIT TO BANGKOK. UPPADIT SAID THAT CHATCHAI WAS ONLY A POLITICIAN TRYING TO TAKE PUBLIC CREDIT FOR UPPADIT'S OWN HARD WORK AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS. UPPADIT LAMENTED THAT CHATCHAI'S BOASTINGS WERE THE SORT OF THING THAT PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS HAD TO LIVE WITH. HE SAID HE HAD REMAINED QUIET AND WATCHED CHATCHAI TAKE CREDIT, AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT ON CHATCHAI'S PART TO OPEN UP HIS CAMPAIGN FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION. WITH

SOME DISGUST, UPPADIT SAID HE VERY MUCH DISLIKED "POLITICIANS".

C. REFUGEES: AT DAS OAKLEY'S REQUEST, UPPADIT AND THE THAI AMBASSADOR (PLUS MALAYSIAN FONMIN AND AMBASSADOR) HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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A PRIVATE BREAKFAST MEETING WITH REFUGEE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN EILBERG ON AUGUST 4, AT LATTER'S REQUEST. NO NEW GROUND WAS BROKEN, BUT UPPADIT MADE A STRONG CASE FOR CONTINUED AND EVEN INCREASED USG SUPPORT AND WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THOSE PRESENT. EILBERG WAS EVEN MOVED TO SAY THAT HE WAS PLEASED BY THE CURRENT 25,000 PAROLE. UPPADIT WAS MOST UNDERSTANDING OF THE PECULIARITIES OF OUR LEGISLATIVE/EXECUTIVE SYSTEM WHICH REQUIRED HIM TO ARISE AT AN EARLY HOUR TO SUPPLEMENT THE MEETING HE HAD HELD WITH OTHER HOUSE MEMBERS THE PREVIOUS MORNING. VANCE

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